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C-116 Pliny Fisk letters, journals, and other material

Pliny Fisk Diary
1816-1820
Acquired Spring 2019; transcribed in May 2019 by Will Simpson '18.5

Andover Theo. [Theological] Sem. [Seminary] July 4. 1816

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A few days since I asked Br. C. to give me a theme for meditation. He answers, What evidence have you that you are a christian? -- I have this morning read the eighth chapter of Baxter's saints, ^rest^ the object of which is to show how we may discern our title to the saints rest. Reflections suggested by the questions and the chapter have brought me to the conclusion that I ought to make more thorough work of searching into the state of my soul than I have done. I propose now to take the question that was suggested and examine it and endeavour to ascertain whether I am one of the disciples of Christ or not. It seems proper to institute this inquiry because, if I am deceiving myself I must perish unless I discover the delusion. -- My eternal interest is at stake. I am now to enquire into my title to heaven. -- Come then C [Christ], my Soul, apply thyself to this work. Lay aside thy love of ease, and bring all thy powers to the investigation. Remember, thou art now to alter to thy most important concerns, to transact business of awful moment. --

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And O, Thou Spirit of light and truth, be present with thine aid. I invoke thy presence, I implore thine aid. Do not deny me. Give me light. Let me understand the principles of which I am to proceed and the rules by which I am to try myself and may I at length after a complete and impartial investigation come to a correct conclusion.
--------My inquiries shall respect three points. 1. Origin of religion in my soul.
2. Subsequent religious exercises.
3. External fruits of piety. -----

1. Was my heart ever renewed? Momentous question. I would weigh it as in the fear of God. The Bible speaks of a new creation, a resurrection from the dead, a transforming and renewing of the mind, the new birth, new heart, new creature, of dying to sin, of being brought out of darkness into

light, of being reconciled to God, engrafted into Christ, united to the saints and separated from the world. All there are but different ways of representing the same thing. -- Have I ever experienced this? -- Once I was stupid in my sin, my affections were engrossed with the world; and God and piety had no place in my heart. Whether the great change has taken place or not, I am safely state as follows. Viz.[Namely] My attention was arres-

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-ted, my soul seemed precious, time short, life uncertain, eternity near, worldly pleasure's honors & wealth of little value, and the course of life I had pursued extremely dangerous and wicked. --
For a time the sovereignty of God seemed like ~~cruct~~ cruelty and my heart was full of those objections and evils so common among the ungodly. I murmured against God, I refused to submit ^myself^ to his disposal, to yield obedience to his laws or to trust in his son for salvation. I labored to reform my life and seemed to succeed. I labored to reform my heart but all in vain it was nothing better but rather grew worse. I repeated my efforts but as often failed of any success. --
A change took place in my views & affections. I had new hopes, & fears, new joys and sorrows, new attachments and aversions. O my God what was that change? Didst Thou then cause my heart to bow or was it all a delusion? Was that change only such as sinners experience and remain impenitent still or was it a new creation? --- Two things I think are true concerning it. 1. It is such a change as I ^have^ never experienced before, nor since. There was then a revolution in my ^mind^ with which I have been at all other times entirely unacquainted.

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But 2. It was not altogether such a change as it seems to me the Bible describes. I sometimes find some difficulty in finding in it any thing which answers exactly to being slain, to dying. I fear I was not ~~as~~ completely cut off as by a sword from all my self-righteous hopes and carnal, worldly desires. I find a want of evidence that the death--blow was struck. ----
The change seems in some respects like the new birth & in some respects unlike it. It seems different from all the revolution of the carnal mind and from all the modifications of sin. Still considered as a spiritual renovation it remains to be attended by some important, if not radical defects. In short it seems to me altogether unsafe to cherish a hope that I am a christian unless I shall ^find^ pretty decisive evidence under the other two proposed heads. If I find there that what seemed definitive at first has been improving this will confirm my hope.
The exercises I have now related took place early in the year 1808. -- I have had time for careful examination of my hope, but desire to record it against myself that I have been unimaginably negligent.

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August 1816.
2. What evidence have I, from subsequent religious exercises?

Here I propose to consider the several graces that constitute the christian character.

1. Love to God. Look back, O my Soul, and review all thy religious exercises, then examine the present state of thy affections, and say Dost thou love God? Are thy meditations of him sweet and delightful? (Does the thought of him often over--?)

Hast thou often, has thou habitually considered him as present? Dost thou love to be in His presence? Do st thou rejoice in His greatness and goodness, and purity ^(holiness)^ and sovreignty? [sic] Is it thy delight that He governs the universe and that all thy concerns are at His disposal? Does it give thee joy to think that thou and all other beings & things are in His hands as the day is in the hands of the Potter?

Is it thy happiness that God has all power, all knowledge concerning thine own character as well as others, all authority, and all dominion? Wouldst thou lessen his attitudes if thou wouldst? Wouldst thou if possible hide anything from him? O my Soul, is God the source of thy happiness. Couldst thou be happy in the enjoyment of him if there were no other being be with in existence? (Dost thou in trouble [th--t] spontaneously resort to him?)

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Does the (thought of this government) ^considerations that the Lord assigns^ reconcile thee to thy lot whatever it may be?

Dost thou desire above all things else that God may be glorified? That all intelligent beings may see His perfections? That all His purposes may be accomplished & that all things may be (subordinated) ^rendered subservient^ to the display of (Gods) ^his^ goodness? Dost ^thou^ feel a cordial interest in His cause and ^in^ the advancement of his kingdom, such as the true ~~Parla~~ Patriot feels in the cause of his King?

Dost thou love Him for his own perfections?

Dost thou love Him for his favors to thee?

Dost thou receive them as His unmerited gifts, ~~as~~ bestowed on one most unworthy? ---

Dost thou long to be like Him, to love what He loves & hate what He hates, to be happy in what pleases him, and to be grieved always with what offends him? Does the character of God suit thee just as if it is revealed? Or if possible wouldst thou alter it? ---- O my Soul I charge thee by thine eternal interest to put these questions, to weight them and answer them conscientiously, deliberately, impartially, seriously, prayerfully and frequently.

I do sometimes take great delight in contemplating the divine character, perfections, law divine [?] and government. I do long to be as God is been & to have others like ^him^ I mourn that I am no more conformed to him

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The perfections displayed in his wishes and revealed in his word, seem glorious & beautiful. I often think the imagination to conceive of no chance to in any respect more glorious or desirable --- But

still in certain views of the divine character I do not feel at all times as I ought. There are ~~sometimes~~ somethings in Gods government of the world which have been exceedingly trying to me. The world under his government is full of sin & misery and sin and misery too [sic] which he could have prevented had he seen fit. I have thought of this, have queried, complained, murmured, read, speculated, disputed and reasoned. The fact is plain. God governs the world, every part of it and every thing that takes place in it, and yet it is full of sin and misery. I cannot probably see all the reasons for this, but I can see that by this means God will display his justice, his hatred of Sin, his mercy the love of the Redeemer, and the comparative beauty of holiness and deformity of sin. Had it not been for this there had been no punishment for sins, sinners, no songs of redeeming tone in heaven. But still there is much darkness connected with the subject. Carnal curiosity prompts me. O my heart, art thou, nevertheless filled with love to the great moral Governor? Dost thou love him?

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(I did once feel) ^once I felt^ opposed to divine sovereignty. But for (almost nine) ^more than eight^ years I have felt no such opposition, though I think I have had, at times, very clear views of the doctrine. My mind has sometimes been perplexed with difficulties but never during this period filled as before with opposition, ~~and~~ Sometimes I have seemed to ^feel^ directly the opposite of what I once felt, and to rejoice in divine sovreignty [sic] as sensibly as I once opposed it. I do sometimes love to think of God as a holy, merciful, just, infinite sovreign [sic]. When I see the world full of sin & sorrow and my mind is ready to sink I feel sensibly relieved by reflecting that God governs. I would not take the reigns ~~of of~~ out of his hands. The Lord reigneth let the earth rejoice, let the multitude of the isles be glad. O my Soul rejoice in thy God. Call into exercise thy best affections, yea all thy ~~nc~~ affections and ~~love~~ ^kindle into love for^ infinite beauty & glory and purity & blessedness, and be happy while lost in God the great fountains of all excellence and bliss. In this great work of loving God never grow cold or weary or inconstant ~~or faint~~. Let the people Praise thee O God, let <u>all</u> the people praise thee. <u>Praise the Lord O my Soul</u>.

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Nov.---------
<u>2. Repentance</u>
My wish is to distinguish between the sorrow of the world and godly sorrow. The former I have often experienced, of the latter I cannot speak with so much confidence. -- Once I was blind to the evil nature of sin and to the number and aggravations of my own ~~guilt~~ ^crimes^. I was alive without the land once [?]. Except for some overt sin I left but little guild. But I have seen since, that sin is an evil and a bitter thing, that my transgressions are exceedingly numerous and exceedingly aggravated. I have at times felt as if there was great propriety in the expression <u>Plague</u> of the <u>heart</u>. The leprosy has seemed to lie deep within. Unbelief, obstinacy, vanity and a whole host of sins of E--- and life ~~have~~ seemed to have filled up my days and to have made up my character. Many things which once appeared lawful and even laudable now seem exceeding sinful and (detestable) ^ordious [sic]^ --

Sometimes my sins appear detestable as (they seem) connected with punishment, but I think they never appear more odious ~~that~~ ^than^ at some seasons when all thought of punishment is out of mind. When I think as no one but myself and of nothing <u>that</u> is future,) of nothing but my past ~~state~~ ^conduct^ and present, tale of heart & (seem) ^are^ disgusted with myself. ---

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When I think of my sins as a violation of Gods holy & reasonable law they seem unreasonable inexcusable and criminal beyond description. When I think of them as committed against God they seem to be a compound of the ^most^ presumptuous rebellion, the most inexcusable ingratitude and the most A wielded irreverence. When I think of their tendency as it respects my fellow-beings they seem like unmixed malevolence. When I look through the fair exterior with wh. [which] I have sometimes deceived myself and perhaps others, and take a view of my heart looking down deep into its emotions and watching the motives wh lie at the bottom of its operations I seem to have been indeed like a whited sepulchre full of all uncleanness. ------- When I take a general view of sin it seem exceeding hateful and my own sin appears peculiarly so. -- But there are some sins and some of wh I have often been guilty that are attended by <u>present</u> pleasure, some that offered a <u>momentary</u> gratification. Have I repented of these? Do there when separated from all idea of punishment seem detestable? Am I effectually weaned from ^them^ all ~~these~~? Was the sinful propensities of my heart are not yet all slain. But do I hate them? Yes I am sure I do. But why? They disturb my peace & expose my soul ^to ruin^. Is this all? I would look (narrowly) ^critically^ into

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After looking as carefully as I can it does seem to me that I wd [would]. That I can and will by divine aid slay my most darling sins for the sake of my Savior. Yes they shall die, my <u>heart</u> has redeemed. ---- --- I have never felt that overwhelming sense of sin wh [which] some have felt, but still I think for more than eight years past nothing has seemed so bad, nothing so odious as sin. O omniscient God, thou knowest my heart. Is ~~it~~ not ^sin^ my greatest burden, the object of my strongest aversion my most constant and settled detestation? -

Dec. 1816.
<u>3. I would</u> enquire into the genuineness of my faith. Am I a believer? Have the exercises of my mind for eight years been such as to afford evidence that I am united to God & Christ by a true & living faith? I wo [would] enquire into my faith in God, in Christ, in H.Y. in the promises & threatnings [sic]. <u>Do I believe there is a God?</u> My understanding assents to the wisdom of his existence. But do I with my whole heart and soul believe that there is One who made, upholds & governs in a most absolute sense universal nature? -- I think I am not deceived when I say, yes. I do. I have had for eight years past, much of the time quite a different sense of ~~sense of~~ God from any thing I had formerly. Now his existence seems like a reality indeed. ------

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Jan. 1917.
L.D. 5. Morn This morning I would enquire as to my faith in Christ. I have read the accounts the bible gives of him and the views christians have had of him. I have studied into the different ~~view~~ kinds of faith and different view ^which^ different persons have entertained of Christ. I have endeavored to ascertain what true faith in Jesus is. -- And now by the light of revelation I desire to look into my heart to see whether there is true faith there. Have I seen my own need of a Mediator, Redeemer & Intercessor? Have i strived, not only my anger but my remedy also, even the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world? Have I seen in Jesus a divine fullness, a richness of merit & efficacy in his blood? Have I received him as my Prophet, Priest, and King? -- I know my heart is deceitful. It has often deceived me and I fear to trust it. Divine Savior, do thou search me and show me what I am. Do thou let me see the exact state of my affections toward thee. Let me know what my real views are of thy dignity and official character. -- Lord thou knowest all things. Dost thou not know that I do believe in thee, commit my whole salvation to thyne hands and rely wholly on thee for pardon, redemption & eternal life? Have I any other Savior? Any other hope? Do I rely on my own doings? Or blindly trust in th [the] mercy ^of God^ without expecting it through thee? Art not thou my only hope & refuge?

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I think of him as of a Being of whose existence I am as well assumed as of my own. I think of him as the Governor of the world and my mind is calmed in view of the most trying scenes. (I often say and I hope I feel, God reigneth let the earth rejoice). -- I never reposed confidence in my best friend in any one instance that I can recollect like the confidence I am sometimes enabled to repose in God. O He is my Supporter in trouble, my Light in darkness, my Guide in doubt, my Refuge from danger, my Benefactor when in want, my all-sufficient good. When I fear for my condition in time to come, I fly to this Supporter. I trust in him to scatter the clouds or enable me to endure the storm. -- I find peace & rest in him. -- His name is indeed a strong tower. I sd [should] run into it & be safe. I think I do this evening feel a sweet, calm peace diffused through my soul while I commit my concerns respecting my (learning,)^education^ property, character, reputation, health, life & salvation, and all the concerns of my dear friends into the ha^n^ds of God. O God I do commit all to thee. I wd [would] rely on thy government with the most unbounded confidence. ----------

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Eve. Today my views of Christ, through not enrapturing have been comforting. Here I feel a temptation in order to prove my faith, to give a colouring to my feelings wh [which] facts will not justify. But of what avail would this be? I could not deceive Omniscience. What if I should describe such views as Edwards or Pearce had? Would it make me feel so? Would it procure me any of the advantages of such feelings? Certainly not. ---

This temptation however shows me something of my own heart. Had my heart not been the seat of hypocrisy and wickedness, such a thought had found no place in it. May I always take occasion by such wicked emotions of my soul to look into its operations to discover every abomination that lurks there. Yes O my heart, when thou dost thus ~~lad~~ lead me toward wickedness I will bring thee to th [sic] light & spread out before my conscience & before my God thy corruption and watch & pray against it. With such a heart how much do I need a Savior and just such a Savior as Immanuel! O he is precious. Without his mighty aid I must perish. In him then let me trust. And can he, will he receive a wretch with such a heart? Lord I believe help thou mine unbelief. ----------
L.D. 12. Have been today to the table of my Lord. I have seen the memorials of my Saviors body & blood. This was a time for the exercise of faith. Without it I must ask, of what use this memory? But when faith leads my affections & meditations I ask no such questions. I see inexpressible significancy [sic] in the ordinance.

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I have had reason today to complain of my dullness and especially of my wandering thoughts, but at some precious moments my faith has seemed to fix on Jesus as my Lord, my Guide and my only hope. ---------
-------I have been far too negligent in the examination of myself to wh [which] I have for some months been attending. I desire now that N.S. [?] may be granted to assist ^me^ to be more thorough, more impartial and more discriminating in my investigation. If my hopes and religious affections can all be accounted for on principles of natural affection, sympathy, habit, education, company, outward circumstances, self-interest, self-righteousness, and hypocrisy I may I see it to be so. I do desire to discover the deepest recesses and worst abominations of my heart. Blessed Spirit, do thou help me to watch narrowly every emotion of my soul and to classify its exercises according to their moral character. Help me to enquire suitably where I have proper views of this existence, powers and influence and may I ~~have~~ be deceived about no part of my moral character.----------
Wed. 15. I have a firm belief in the existence, personality and influence of the U.S. Is this belief deep and practical? I have this morning felt deeply my need of ~~th~~ his influence can think of nothing that I desire so much for myself or for my friends as the influence of the U.S. ----

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Th. ~~11~~ 16 I can dearly see that my sins will still prevail and my lusts gain strength in spite of all I can do, in spite of all the means of grace, and in spite of everything except the U.S. do purify my affections. He can I am persuaded he can make me clean. He can give me unaffectid [sic] humility, universal benevolence, christian tenderness, deep repentance, unwavering operative faith and ardent love to every good thing. I seem to see how easy it would be for the U.S. to slay my rising corruptions, to consecrate all my natural and social affections and transform me into the likeness of my Savior. O Blessed Agent who dost purify the hearts of men, do thou purify my heart and make it altogether holy. ----------

L.D. 19. I open my bible and read the promises it contains. How there are a proper object for faith to embrace. There are promises to individuals & to the people of God as a body, of temporal & eternal good. How shall I determine whether my views of the promises are those of a real believer? I know the views of a stupid sinner. I know my views have undergone a change. But was it a change deep & radical wrought by the spirit of God? ----------
When the prospects before me are darkest, & when Zion is threatened with destruction do I find complete relief in the promises of God? --- I do now distinctly recollect some moments when after taking such a view of myself and the world as tended to depress my spirits some promise of God has occurred, dissipated my fears, supported my sinking hopes and given my soul relief. ---

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If God have said anything shall be. I can often view it as a fact. -- I think so far as I am concerned I can live upon the promises of God. ----------
Sometimes when the welfare of Zion has been threatened the sure promises of the Bible have relieved the anxiety of my mind. I have seen the Almighty befriending his church and have faith that all was safe Earth may be shaken to its centre but Zion shall not be removed forever. I love the church and when her interests are in danger my soul is filled with grief. But I read the promises and have her secure in her Makers arms. ----------
---------The threatenings of Jehovah ~~are~~ also ~~calculated to~~ demand our most implicit faith. He has threatened to punish his children when they wander, to pour his fury on his enemies & to punish with endless wrath all incorrigible offenders. Do I live with an habitual sense of these threatenings and with a firm belief that they will be executed? Certainly I have sometimes but a faint sense of Gods wrath against sin. At other times however the propriety of his doing as he has said he will do appears exceedingly plain. Sometimes my mind is filled with a kind of pleasant dread when I contemplate Gods wrath against sin. I feel that he will honor his name & fulfil his word. Let me then fear to sin and turn speedily form all iniquity.

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Feb. 1817.
If love to God repentance and faith do differ essentially from the exercises & affections I have had I am as yet unable to ~~detect the t~~ discover the difference. I have from day to day ~~to day~~ some most delightful contemplations of God some most sweet meditations on his character, and government, & some humbling self-loathing views of myself as a sinner, of my daily and hourly sins of heart of thought & feeling and action, and some very comfortable frames of mind in resting on God as governor of the world, on Christ as my Redeemer & on th [the] H. Spirit as my Sanctifier. But though I find upon a general view of my religious experience so much comfort and hope yet I see so many defects, so many forbidding things, and so much danger of deception that I desire to search still farther and enquire after the fruits of holiness. And as I proceed, O Omniscient Spirit, grant me thine aid, open to my view the true fruits of the Christian character, the true lineaments of a firm

countenance. Show me what I am & what I am doing. Help me to sit as an impartial judge on myself & may I not mistake the moral character, the motives, the tendency or the real effects of my words and actions. Give me patience to pursue th [the] investigation, and to weigh evidence as I find it & if I am deceived may some discovery show me where I am & if I am thine may I be confirmed in my faith & hope. Amen.

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March 1. L.D. 1918. Theol. Sem. [Theological Seminary] Andover. --
For several years it has been my hope that I sd [should] after a while get such clear views of sin and of the nature of christian experience as to be able to decide whether I am a mservant [manservant?] of God or a servant of sin. The evidence that I am a servant of God is by no means satisfactory. The servant serves his master. Why then do I not serve my God? Why not strive to please him, to keep his commands, to honor him? Why am I not devoted to his business and occupied in it? -- I have indeed long hoped that my character was impressed in some faint degree with the image of my savior, that I had begun to hate sin, & love holiness. A few months since for several weeks I had as I then thought most sensible exercises of love to my brethren when I contemplated them as th [the] followers of Jesus and servants of the Most High God. -- And I do not now despair entirely of finding evidence that th U.S. has begun to sanctify me. Yet for two or three weeks past I have seen little or nothing in my heart or life but sin. It seems as if I begun to sin at the

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...commencement of my existence; and my feelings and all the operations of my mind and the actions of my life when tried by God's holy land seem much of th [the] time to present only a dark black exhibition of sin. My native corruption has been exercised in view of every object & has assumed almost every shape. It is impossible for any words that I know of to express the extent and aggravations of my pride, and vanity, my covetousness and love of the world, my selfrighteousness and complacence [sic] in my own character, my forgetfulness of God & insensibility to the love of Christ, my violation of my own resolutions; the wickedness of my prayers and exhortations & preaching, the hardness and insensibility of my heart. -- Today I have been at the table of my Lord. I have seen th tokens of his love, his bleeding love. I have participated of the memorials of his death. My affections ought to have been ~~elevated~~ ^enkindled^ into a most sacred flame but instead of this my whole soul has been like a cake of ice

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Or an solid rock. And even now while I write these charges against myself, my heart does does not break, my sins do not yield. I can see that God commands me to be holy, can bring myself before the cross of Jesus, can change myself with wandering th [the] dear Redeemer and with being insensible of th guilt and can admit the change and still not be moved. -- When at the communion table it was plain that I ought to give myself wholly to th Savior & resolve to love & obey him. But I

had not strength to make one single pious resolution. Sin had seized ~~fast~~ hold on me and fastened upon me with all its benumbing influence. O can such a wretch ever be made holy? ----------

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Dec. 1819. My third enquiry respects the external fruits of piety. Though true religion consists essentially in a right state of heart yet the tree is known by its fruit & out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. All professions & hopes are vain if the life is not regulated by the word of God. Do I bring forth the fruits of righteousness? Though perhaps the xn [christian] never says a word or does an action which t [the] sinner may not say or do, yet there must on the whole be a very great difference between the life & conversation of a saint & of a sinner. When I review my life I see much cause for fears & doubts. I serve myself. I am influenced by the examples, the maxims & the advice of a wicked world. I am not industrious in my Masters business, [loss] am not devoted with singleness of heart to his service. -- Still it seems to be the desire of my heart to stay & serve God & have no other Master. When I lay my plan, & form my resolutions for life nothing seems so important as to please him. To live and not serve him, to live in rebellion against him seems worse than death ~~I have thought of a state of~~ nothing seems so durabul [sic] to some as

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...the thought of dishonoring my profession & bringing reproach as the cause of Christ ----------From different sources I seem to find some ground to hope that Christ will own me as one of his servant and disciples. Every examination of the subject however leads me to the following results. If I am a xn [Christian] I have not that evidence wh [which] removes all ground for doubt. It will take me all my life to prove my adoption and make my calling and election sane. All my gra[--] are very weak and need to be strengthened that I may serve & honor my Savior while I live. There are some great defects in my frames habits & conduct wh must be seriously attended to. There is much in my character that must be destroyed & much that ^must^ be completely remodelled [sic]. I am destitute to an unhappy degree of the supports & joys wh religion is calculated to yield and why it is the xns privilege to enjoy. -- I am exceedingly unprofitable in the vineyard of Christ & am likely to remain so. Some radical defect, either in contrivance or execution seems to attend my prans and accomplish almost nothing for the honor of Christ or the good of souls.

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Sat. Dec. 18. 1819. At sea. Br. Parsons proposed that we should devote this day to special prayer for the out-pouring of the Spirit on us and them who sail with us. We have no room by ourselves and no place of retirement -- & no convenient opportunity for special social prayer. Yet it seems pleasant & I hope will prove profitable to pray in our hearts, each one apart. --- Read chap. 9 in Saints Rest -- felt keenly, the reproof it administers for my c----- about the souls of others and my youthful way of exciting them to seek this rest: earnestly desire to be more deeply sensible ~~y~~ of this misery & to have more skill & more faithfulness in dealing with them.

Read chap. 10. And found it peculiarly adapted to do me good in my present state of mind. Since sailing from America and indeed frequently during my journeyings & labors the past year I have been eagerly desirous of a time and a place to rest. My mind has clung to love and been often occupied with thoughts of domestic tranquility & happiness. The thought of returning, by & bye to America & staying there at least for a time, retried from labor & freed from care has been cherished with inexcusable fondness. Trials & hard-

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-ships & unceasing cares & labors have assumed a forbidding aspect. I have sometimes been almost ready to say "I pray thee have me excused." In short I discover in my heart precisely the feelings & desires wh [which] it is Baxters object in this chapter to suppress & wh every xn [Christian] ought to be ashamed of. All this is wrong, is foolish, is dangerous. I hate it. I abhor myself for it. --
"Now I forbid my carnal hopes,
My fond desires recall;
I give my mortal interest up,
And make my God my all."

Dec. 28. In the morning I had an unusually interesting and profitable conversation with Br. Parsons. -- He had observed in my conversation and conduct a number of things which he thought improper and like a wise and faithful brother he sought an auspicious moment and take me with tender caution bu with faithful honesty how he felt. The words of the wise are as good. Still Christian faithfulness does beget love. O for grace to improve this kind & well timed admonition as I ought. O for more humility and discretion. --

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Feb. 3. 1820. We dined at Mr. Lee's. -- Mr. L. is considered one of the most religious men in the place yet he says, at table before his family and before company -- the Dance! God! A Devilish clever fellow! A damned Rascal. L.

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And when we came home at nine o'clock at night, he came with his wife, son & daughters & company to attend the widely ball at the Casino. He invited & rather urged us to stop. Such is the religion of the Franks at S. ---
After returning we spent an hour in conversing about these evening dinners and the temptations to which they expose us. Several in circumstances show us plainly that these lovers of pleasure & amusement 'watch for our halting' and hope to succeed in enticing us into a conformity to all their excesses. We feel that it is time to stop. This is enchanted ground. May the Lord strengthen us. --
Read Ps. 51. United in repeated confessions and prayer.

Mon. Feb. 7. Settled at length where we can enjoy retirement we devote this day to fasting. --I find myself much troubled with wandering thoughts. -- The study of languages in wh I am engaged has so engrossed my mind that I can scarcely pray without thinking of it. ----------
L.D. Feb. 13. -- For some days past I have found my private devotions more agreeable than usual. In the morning my mind has been delightfully led to supplicate the presence of God for my dear Br. P. as well as for myself. --

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Friday Feb. 25. 1820. We devote this day to fasting and prayer. -- My meditations last eve and this morning led me to reflect on my negligence in self examination and to resolve on making that the special business of today.
1. I searched my ~~life~~ ^habits^ with respect to secret devotion. At present I enjoy better opportunities in this respect than I have enjoyed for a long time, better probably than I shall enjoy in years to come. Now, we have each of us a little room in which we may be as retired as we wish & as often & as long as we wish. This is a great privilege. I am fully convinced that my usefulness, comfort & even safety depends on a close, private walk with God. But alas! I find much occasion for self-~~reproach~~ reproach. -- The recollection of my sin & folly causes shame and tears and I hope ingenerous [sic] remorse. For a time a ~~loud~~ heavy burden lay on my spirit. But I found relief in confession, prayer and earnest desires & resolution to pray often, longer and more earnestly & when thus relieved I was let to supplicate grace for all Gods children every where, that they may have the Spirit of private devotion.
2. I enquired respecting my love to the Bible. & found a criminal and damning deficiency. This gave occasion for confession, prayer, & renewed resolutions. ----

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3. I enquired respecting my treatment of my Colleague. It is certainly one of the happiest circumstances of my life that I am connected with so affectionate, cleverful [sic] & pious a Brother. But on examination I find that I have not sufficiently praised this blessing and have not taken the pains I ought, to render myself worthy of such a companion -- I have not made his intents my own in secret as I ought nor have I been sufficiently tender and respectful in our common intercourse. I desire to be humble & penitent & in future to be more circumspect & arise - to do more for his happiness & to be ~~can~~ careful to secure all the advantages which his Society is calculated to afford.

L.D. Feb. 27. 1920. I find the great advantage of enjoying quiet retirement on th [the] Sabbaths. Who wd [would] have thought that I wd find them so much more pleasant in these respects here than in a Christian land. The Lord be praised. -- Had some sweet communion with Br. P. He gave me some gentle & faithful admonitions. Blessed be God for such a brother. He seems "as desirous that I should be without spot as himself." I hope and resolve & pray -- to be more like him soon. -----

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Mon. March. 6. 1820. I have of late felt more sensibly than usual, my great & criminal deficiencies in regard to a Christian temper & deportment. It seems to me that in intercourse with my most intimate friends there has been an awful deficiency in respect to humility, tenderness, respect and candor. I have reason to believe that I have often wounded the feelings of my best friends by my bluntness, and severity, and often grieved their pious minds by my levity and foolish jesting and other things 'wh [which] are not convenient.' O that I might be so changed that all who fear God's name 'will be glad when they see me'. ----------
-- This is convent day. We devote it to fasting & prayer. I have had some agreeable meditations about Christ's kingdom. -----
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Thurs. 16. -- We devote this day to fasting and prayer.
--In our morning devotions besought God for his aid & presence. --- ~~After son~~ In retirement I read with uncommon delight the account in Acts of th [the] missionary labors of Paul and others. My faith was strengthened when I saw how God used to comfort, defend & prosper his servants in this land. -- -- -- We spent an hour together - reat th ss. Song, conversed & twice united in prayer. The subject was the glory & excellence of th bible and the importance of our having a more thorough and a more spiritual understanding of it. -- -- --
After this I spent some time in reading Scott on Revelation -- -- --

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In the afternoon we directed our attention to the subject of our intercourse with people in this city -- conversed about our dangers, our duty and the methods of doing good -- prayed for divine protection and help -- Read Baxter's chapter on the duty of Xns [Christians] to excite others to seek this heavenly rest. Again prayed to be preserved from danger and made faithful. -- --
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Thoughts on preparation for death.

1. What is implied in preparation for death?

1. Proper arrangement of temporal affairs. Some men are distressed at the hour of death because by arrangements which then demand attentions which they are unable to bestow & wh [which] prevent their attending ~~as~~ calmly & wholly to more important things. In cases of sudden death survivors often suffer an amount of a criminal negligence in this matter.
2. Our concerns with men must be ~~right~~ -- in a proper state. -- Personal animosities ~~and~~ unreconciled divisions and unpardoned injuries are thorns to a single head. --- Obligations neglected, omissions of duty, & improper examples must then occasion little regret. While living we should say & do & be all that we wish others to say of us after our decease & nothing else.

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If we would be habitually ready for death we must do every day, all the deeds of charity & piety toward others which we would wish to remember on th [the] bed of death or to have them remember after our decease . ----------

3. Our concern with God must be in a proper state. At death we go immediately into his presence. We need then th [the] true knowledge of God -- sincere & supreme love to him -- th [the] pardon of sin & a heart prepared to rejoice in th presence of our Maker.

2. What preparation is especially necessary for Missionaries in this country?

1. That their plans -- operations -- correspondence -- papers and engagements be in such a state that they may be left at any time without injury or dishonor to the missionary cause --
2. A state of mind so fixed on God & heaven as to meet death with composure without th solace of Christian company.
3. That holy courage & superiority to suffering and reproach wh wd not fail in the hour of Martyrdom.

3. Why should men be always ready to die?

1. That they may be free from the slavish fear of death. Some Christians are always alarmed ~~wh~~ & distressed in time of prevailing sickness & peril because they have not all things in readiness for their departure. Habitual, conscious preparation for death would prevent this & greatly promote xn cheerfulness & joy even in th greatest danger. ----------

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2. Preparation for death is in reality the best preparation for life -- it regulates our desires, our plans, our estimate of earthly things, & our expectations of earthly happiness. It preserves us from such extravagance & folly & wd be evidently incompatible with the thought of a speedy death. --

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3. Why especially sd [should] missionaries in this country be prepared to die.

Because, considering the dangers of the climate, the prevalence of th [the] Plague, th tyranny of th government, th number of robbers, assassins & bandits, th apparition of all classes to their objects & th various hazards they must en----, they are peculiarly exposed to death.

Th. March 23, 1820. We set apart this day for fasting with especial reference to preparation for death. Spent a part of th forenoon & a part of th afternoon together and th rest apart. In th afternoons I read the above reflections & Br. P. [Brother Parsons] read something on the same subject. -- We read t scriptures -- sung Hymns 222 & 223 of Dr. W., selection & repeatedly cried to God that we may be prepared to die, that our death whenever it occurs may be for his glory & th good of souls & that our Christian friends & all th dear children of God may be prepared for their departure. - - - We ought to be ready not only each of us to die himself but

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Also ~~to~~ each to have th [the] other tokens from him. -- Death seems like a certain & perhaps a very near event. Should my days he soon finished I have hope but am not without fears. I need more dear and sensible faith in the blood of ~~th~~ Jesus. ------

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L.D. March. 26. This is t [the] sabbath of t Lord our God. -- a holy day -- to be devoted to t most holy worship of t God of holiness. How can such a wretch as I am keep t day aright. Ah! How much do I need sanctifying grace. O that God wd [would] visit me this day & on every sabbath with influences from heaven.

L.D. April 2. During most of t past week I have been unhappy. -- I think I never saw so much of my heart before & it seems to me that it was never so full of sin before. For 4 or 5 ^days^ there was an incessant stubbornness and hardness of heart, of selfishness and best, of unbelief and rebellion attended with shame and grief, keep remorse and bitter reproaches of conscience with painful apprehensions and sometimes a full and distressing conviction that God will never bless this mission while such a compound of all sins as I am, is connected with it. I was gloomy and unsociable and peevish. I could neither confess sin with any tenderness of heart nor pray with any earnestness for pardon. I could think of no situation or circumstances on earth in wh [which] I sd [should] be happy or useful without ^being^ completely created anew in my whole character, disposition and habits. -- I could see how I ought to humble myself before God and enter into his

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...service & how easy I might become one of the happiest men on earth ~~kcy~~ if my heart cd [could] be thoroughly broken & I cd liye [sic] down in the dust. But whatever my conscience or my reason or t M. S. suggested of this sort my ~~rebel~~ heart rebelled against or shrunk back from & there was no moving it t [the] right way. -- For two days past my spirits have been revived - my gloom & distress is in great measure gone & in something, there seems to be a little yielding of heart, yet I cannot see that one sin is slain or that anything is done toward a better frame of mind or a better life. As my distress seemed to be wholly t [the] work of my own wicked heart rather than t [the] Spirit of God staying my sins, so my relief seems to be merely a flow of animal spirits without t comforts of a victory over sin or the tranquility of nesting in t bosom of my Lord. I know how I ought to serve God and I know that it wd be t height of happiness to do it. But oh! This heart, this wretched, stubborn heart, full of t spirit of hell! And still so insensible of it! If I wd see my guilt & be smitten to t dust for it this wd be some relief. Sometimes it seems a little as though I cd hate sin and love my Savior & love religion & then t prevalence of some sin in my heart shows t mistake. --
The holy Supper is to be administered today in t English Chapel & I go to partake. And O! If my Redeemer would meet me there & smite my heart & slay my sins then how wd I love & serve him. --

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Mon. April. 3. 1820. Monthly Concert. We devote t [this] day to fasting. I enjoyed more than usual freedom & earnestness, in t [the] morning in praying that we may be fitted for a long and useful life or an early death as t will of God may be. -- Here is something inexpressibly delightful in t thought of living a long, active & useful life & dying in old age surrounded by spiritual children. -- I love to think of spending a year in this region -- at Scio & ~~Smyrna & t other~~ t seven churches -- distributing bibles & preparing t way ~~of~~ for others to labor -- then hope to go to Judea -- write a while at Jerusalem, then go through t country, see some other missionaries established at different places -- come this way again, return to America -- see t friends of missions -- spend a year or two there -- come back again if t Lord will, ~~with a wise & godly life [----]~~ & spend my days at Jerusalem -- witness the effusions of t H.S. [Holy Spirit?] grow old & die there. -- But I must check there anticipations -- Perhaps I am this summer to die of the Plague-- or if I live a little longer, perhaps all my plans will be completely overturned. -- But if I desire all this from love to my Redeemer & t souls of men -- it will be accepted that I have had it in my heart. If self is at the bottom success of disappointment wd be perhaps equally a curse. -- Omniscient God thou knowest my heart -- thou knowest what is best. I commend myself and my plans to thee. ----

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~~Wednesday April~~
Thursday April 13, 1820. We devote this day to fasting & prayer. -- In t morning I felt very little inclination to the duties of the day, that by meditation & reading a little interest was excited & from 11 to 12 I enjoyed an unconsciously precious hour with Br. Parsons.

It is readily admitted that we are dependent on God. All who have any knowledge of natural or revealed religion see and acknowledge it on a truth not to be questioned that we derived our being from him & depend on him entirely for it, continuance & for all blessings. He gave us being & ordered all t merciful circumstances wh attended our birth -- we lived in him while infants & while children. ~~Whe~~ We have lived in him by day & ^by^ night, in health & ^in^ sickness, by land & ^by^ sea. He gave us all our senses & faculties & each sensation & act of them ~~all have~~ ^has^ been by his power. Each days refreshment & each nights repose has been his gift. Each ~~second~~ ^moment^ we have breathed, our blood has circulated and our pulse has beat through his continued power. Now no power in t [the] universe but his can give us light or air or food -- can keep our bodies in order -- our minds active or rational -- or preserve life a moment. Each word we utter, each thought -- each act or sensation mental or corporeal, is the fruit of divine ~~book~~ power, is as it were...

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… a continual act of creating goodness. -- If we have any agreeable moments -- if we enjoy intellectual or social happiness, if we are kept ^from^ any crimes to wh [which] we are tempted or exposed, if we know anything of religious consolation it is because God acts in our behalf. ----

Of all this the thoughtless stupid world is insensible. Their words & thoughts & feelings are as if they had their being independently -- as if all their powers & faculties were absolutely their own -- as if God had no concern with them or their affairs except ^perhaps^ on some special occasions. They move & act as if no divine power were exerted on their behalf -- as if no obligation towards God rested on them. -- The thought of perverting faculties he has given is no part of their grief -- the consciousness of pleasing him by a proper use of his gifts is no part of their happiness. -- -- But it is in the privilege & the duty of Xns [Christians] to feel their dependance & to reduce their belief respecting it to practice. They may & sometimes, no doubt, they do, live as if they lived only in God. -- thy eat & drink & sleep & work as if God ^a love^ enabled them to do all these things -- as if it were for him to decide whether any & how much success shall attend their labors -- as if all the consequences of their conduct & circumstances & t issue & effect of all their plans rested with ~~them~~ ^him^. This frame of mind makes them grateful to God for their...

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...successes -- submissive to trials -- humble in prosperity -- contented in adversity-- & sensible that all favors increases their obligations to serve their Maker. --- WIth this sense of dependence in temporal things it may be supoosed that xns [christians] will unite a still more lively dependence on God in every thing that concerns their souls. They will feel that all will be in vain under God not only give them ~~themn~~ bibles - & sabbaths - & sermons & seasons for fasting and prayer but excite in them a relish for these things & open their hearts & bless the means of grace. They will strive against sin -- labor after holiness and make new resolutions fully sensible that for every degree of progress they must depend on a divine arm. When the children of God are so happy as to cultivate & possess this frame of mind for a long time the most desirable fruits will be produced. -- They will be humble & quiet before God -- -- they will not dare to sin. -- when they feel that t power of speech is given & exerted only by the power of God -- they will ~~feel that~~ not dare to speak except what he will approve. In this way they will fortify themselves against temptation -- their graves will acquire strenght [sic] -- their thought of God will be exalted & their meditation of him will be sublime. -- The distraction of this giddy world will not disturb them. They will live in God -- will rest in God -- will worship God & serve him and God...

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...will to them be all in all. They will loose [sic] themselves in him & their haven [sic] will begin on earth.

Fri. April 21, 1820 Devote the day to fasting. -- Br. P. read a piece on Trusting in God -- I read the above remarks on Dependence. --- -- Days ^of fasting^ almost ^always^ seem useful to me. They get my mind away from my studies -- give me more knowledge of my self -- lead me to sober reflections & excite desires after more holiness as well as shame & remorse on account of sin.

L.D. April. 23. My sins are not yet subdued. My spiritual enemies wh [which] continually disturb my peace -- shut me out from the divine favor -- expose me to severe chastisement -- and endager t [the] success of this mission -- are still suffered to rise up against me. I perceive wherein I offered God and wound my conscience & yet I seem to have no resolutions or no strength to fulfil my sins. -- pride -- ambition -- stubbornness -- unbelief -- unhallowed passions -- I clearly perceive wherein I neglect duty and wherein my graces are defective and yet I find little or no strength for supplying these alarming deficiencies. -- Yet sin seems hateful and I cannot be content without such a heart & such a life as will please my Redeemer. --

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O that I might feel the powerful operation of divine grace on my heart. O for humility tenderness of conscience -- pureness of mind -- penitence and love. O for a heart that would instinctively shrink away from every appearance of evil -- every tendancy [sic] to sin. O for a heart so filled & expanded with benevolence as to make the interests of all the human race my own, so captivated with the beauties of holiness as to love and venerate the Saints and esteem them the excellent of the earth -- so penetrated with a sense of the evil of sin & the danger of sinners as to cry mightily in prayer and labor zealously for their salvation. O for clearer views of God, for such apprehensions of his greatness & his grace manifested in the Redeemer -- as shall overwhelm and captivate and melt my whole soul. What bliss must this be, to be swallowed up & lost in th [the] infinite Jehovah! To see the glory of God! To see & feel & enjoy the love of Christ! To have this soul raised above earth and absorbed in those views & joys for which its capacities are adapted! Yet all this may most certainly be enjoyed by serving God -- all this bliss may be mine whenever I will renounce sin & give myself up wholly to Christ.

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L.D. April 30. 1820. I have lately discovered in myself a great degree of selfishness. O that it might be slain so that I might never set up any interest of my own indistinction from that of my friends -- of the church -- of the human ^race^ -- ~~above all is~~ least of all in distinction from the glory of my Redeemer. --

Eve. -- Before leaving America, I had occasion for some time to preach so often that I became almost tired of the work and began to long for a season of rest. -- Now my circumstances have so long prevented my preaching that I long exceedingly for an opportunity to engage in the delightful work again. I often think of the congregations in which I used to labor and though 5000 miles from them, I seem to be there again, listening to their songs of praise ~~and~~ uniting with them in their prayers and endeavouring to comfort and animate Christians and win sinners to Christ. It seems to me now that an opportunity to go weekly to a large congregation of precious souls and preach the gospel to them would be a very great privilege.

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Some thoughts on the means by wh [which] xty [Christianity] was first propagated in comparison with the means now used for diffusing it. --
The gospel was propagated in the first centuries 1. By preaching. -- The apostles & other disciples went out and preached the gospel. And sinners were converted. --
2. By the blood of martyrs. Though x [Christ] climated [?] his followers to fly from one city to another in order to avoid persecution & through they sometimes did this yet they never thought of ceasing to preach X because men threatened their lives. They loved not their lives even unto death. Their blood ran freely in testimony of th [the] truth. Scarcly [sic] anything contributed more to engage attention, to forces conviction on the mind, to subdue th heart to th love of God than the manner in wh t martyrs suffered. Their blood was indeed the seed of the church. -
3. By separation from the world. -- Neither the hope of escaping persecution - nor the wish to gain the influence of th rich - th learned or t great - nor the hope of winning ungodly men gradually to the love of truth induced the primitive disciples to temporise...

[In side margin]:
Acts Mat. 3.1. -- 6. & 4. 23 - 25 & 28.19.~~35.40~~. Luke 9.1 -- 6.&10.1-17. 2.14-31. & 2.12-26-& 7. ~~72~~ 12.35.40. & 10.33 --44. & 13. & 17. & 18 & 28.31.

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...or to attempt any coalition with the ungodly. They did not understand that wisdom wh [which] labors to gain the names th [the] titles or th treasures of men who withhold their hearts. When we look at their movements we see every where t friends of Christ on one side & th world on the other with a broad line of demarcation between.
4. By Miracles. Frequently when Christ wrought miracles the consequence was that many believed on him. At the day of Pentecost th attention of the multitude was first excited by the sound from heaven, th gift of tongues &c. [etc.] -- It was when signs & wonders were wrought among the people that believers were the more added to the Lord. -- When it was known throughout all goppa [?] that Peter had raised Jabitta to life many believed in th Lord. ---
It was a miracle wh first excited the attention of the gailer [jailer] & his family. ----------
See John. 2.11. & 4.53. & 9.17. & 11.45. Acts. 2. 23. & 5.12-14. & 9.3. 42. & 10, 3. & 16.26. & 14.17.18.

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At present we see among the means used for spreading the gospel ---

1. The distribution of t [the] bible. Apostles wrote and circulated epistles & they who had the scriptures searched them. But the written ^word^ did not by any means occupy so important a place then as it does now. It seems now at least in the view of many to be the grand author on wh [which] we are to rely.

2. Education Sabbath Schools, -- instruction of heathen children. School Societies &. Education for t Ministry.
3. By counting craftily the favor of th great who will not lend their aid simply out of regard to Christ & his cause.
4. By preaching. Though preachers are very imperfect and though other methods may be preferred by the wisdom of this world yet it will be found that where the true gospel really prevails it is generally by means of preaching. -- This is a method instead of wh nothing can be substituted. ------

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What practical instructions does this comparison afford?

1. ~~We love reason~~ All who are engaged in spreading t [the] Gospel should carefully examine their motives -- & th means they use. -- and be very watchful. --
2. There is need of special care in regard to combination with the wicked. The kingdom of x [Christ] must be built up by the servants of x. -- A holy God must be displeased when wicked men are at the head of systems adopted for the furtherance of his gospel. How can we expect his favor when we see a duellist (last[--agh]) ~~cut t~~ in the chair of one of the first Missionary Societies in th world -- (Ch. Miss.) --- Dukes presiding at the most important religious meetings, who in private keep their Mistresses -- & the man who is at one time drinking & gambling at another time making eloquent speeches in favor of propagating xty [Christianity] (Ex. Clay speaking before t Colonisation Society.)
3. There is great need of urgent and fervent prayer for the blessing of God on the means that are in use. --

Mon. May 1. 1820. Concert day -- devoted to fasting -- mad [sic] the preceding reflections. Br. P. read on the means by wh. Xns may obtain the outpouring of the H. Spirit.

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Sat. Noon. May 6. 1820. Enjoyed unusual satisfaction in reading the bible. O that I may always love that blessed book. ----------

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L.D. 7. No heart for secret devotion -- no earnest intercessions for others. When O, when shall I be freed from the chilling influence of sin. -- I cannot be happy without enjoying God -- I see that nothing but sin prevents my enjoying always the light of his countenance & yet I do not cease to sin!

Mon. 8. Happy must the humble man be! O for more humilty [sic]. It seems to me if I were humble I should be happy. ---